

PODCAST SITES
DOWNTOWN FARIBAULT

FARIBAULT HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION
SELF-GUIDED PODCAST TOUR MAP

Parking

Podcast Site

Historic Preservation District

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Certified Local Government Grant

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HISTORIC SITES
SELF-GUIDED PODCAST TOUR
CITY OF FARIBAULT

WELCOME!!

Welcome to Faribault! This brochure is intended to accompany a series of on-line podcasts that use video and audio to more fully describe the significant events, people, and architecture behind some of Faribault's most historically important buildings. Please visit the link at www.faribaultnpc.org from your smartphone to download the podcasts. Some buildings have QR scanning codes located near their main entrances – smartphone users who have downloaded a QR scanning code app can simply scan the code and be directly connected with the associated building podcast. Or, if you don't have your own smartphone, you may checkout a device at the Buckham Memorial Library, located at 9 Division Street in downtown Faribault.

QR SCANNING CODE

Brief History of Faribault

Alexander Faribault, an early fur trader and entrepreneur, founded the town site in 1852 to take advantage of its scenic qualities, abundant resources and strategic location. In the 1860s, Faribault gained national recognition as an educational and religious center due in large measure to the efforts of Bishop Henry Whipple in developing a system of interrelated churches and schools. This, along with the establishment of the highly acclaimed State Academies for the Blind and Deaf, led Faribault to be known as "The Athens of the West". As the community flourished, a number of homes, churches and public buildings were constructed with outstanding architectural design features. As a result, Faribault is fortunate to have more than 40 individual properties that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

European settlers were pleased to find that the Faribault area had rich supplies of limestone suitable for construction, located less than a mile from the new town. Faribault's first three quarries opened in the mid 1850s, supplying stone which was shaped by immigrant stone masons from Quebec, Ireland and Germany. The masons used the versatile limestone to build their own vernacular homes and to create the formal architecture of area churches and stylish Gothic Revival cottages. Both the builders and the occupants of limestone buildings played significant roles in the town's past development and present appearance.

Faribault's Historic Commercial District, located primarily along Central Avenue (formerly Main Street), provides visitors with a clear vision of the town in the 1880s. The downtown area features well-preserved Italianate storefronts of local brick and limestone with impressive architectural details. In an era when malls and highways were unknown, Faribault's downtown welcomed both commerce and celebration. Recently, many local property owners have worked hard to restore and rehabilitate the buildings within the Historic Commercial District back to their former glory. We hope you enjoy learning more about our beautiful community and make time to visit the local retail, restaurant and service establishments.

City of Faribault

JUNE 06, 2011

Grant Recipient
HISTORIC & CULTURAL GRANTS
CITY OF FARIBAULT



(1) Thomas Scott Buckham Library
9 Division Street

This beautiful temple of learning was built in 1929-1930 and given to the City by Anna Buckham as a memorial to her husband, Judge Thomas Buckham. The building was designed by the couple's nephew, Charles Buckham, and is a striking example of Art Deco architecture with a Kasota stone exterior. Inside, to inspire the patrons, Anna Buckham paid for murals with Greek themes, painted by Alfred Hyslop, an art instructor at nearby Carleton College. She also brought in one of America's most important stained glass artists, Charles Connick of Boston, to complete the Greek-themed windows.

(2) Alexander Faribault House
12 1st Avenue NE

Alexander Faribault, fur trader, entrepreneur and the City's founder, lived between the worlds of the Native American and the white settler. He first settled in the region in 1826 when he opened a trading post on Cannon Lake among the Wapekuta band of the Dakota. In 1851, two important Indian treaties were signed that opened up all the land of Minnesota for new settlers. As a result, Faribault could now own land near the Straight and Cannon Rivers. He invested his money in property for a new town, and soon, friends, family and other newcomers put up log cabins and crude shops in the area. In 1853, Faribault built the first frame house in town along the Straight River, this 2 ½ story Greek Revival house. One of the oldest wood-frame houses in the state, this piece of Faribault's history was saved from demolition in 1945 by the Rice County Historical Society.



This was one of the earliest commercial buildings designed by deaf Faribault architect Olof Hanson. Hanson lost the hearing in his right ear as a young boy following a severe case of frostbite. As a teenager, Hanson entered the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf in Faribault. An exceptional student, he graduated in three years and then attended Galludet University in the nation's capital. It was there that Hanson set on a career in architecture. Although some counselors tried to discourage him from the profession, Hanson persevered. Eventually, clients began accepting his plans and work became so plentiful that he hired four assistants. During his seven years as an architect in Faribault, he designed 24 private residences, 18 store buildings and hotels, 10 school buildings and 2 churches. Although the street level has been substantially altered, note the fine arched windows and stepped cornice – a testament to Olof Hanson's skill as an architect.



(3) Kaul Block
201 Central Avenue

This beautiful building is Faribault's only example of Victorian polychromy. In 1883, local businessman Ansel Hill commissioned craftsman Cormack McCall to construct the decorative stonework, including the granite pillars on the ground floor, the terra cotta insets and the rusticated stone arch over the second floor window. The building illustrates how downtown businessmen could create a functional and attractive building, while using common design elements to bring a sense of visual harmony to the downtown. A typical commercial façade consists of three parts: the storefront with an entrance and large window displays, the upper masonry façade with regularly spaced windows, and the decorative cornice that caps the building. These components may appear in various shapes, sizes and styles, but the result is essentially the same façade. One of the principles of downtown historic preservation is to encourage building owners to keep each of those three components intact when restoring a building. The most recent Union Block building restoration was completed in 2008 with the assistance of federal historic preservation tax credits.



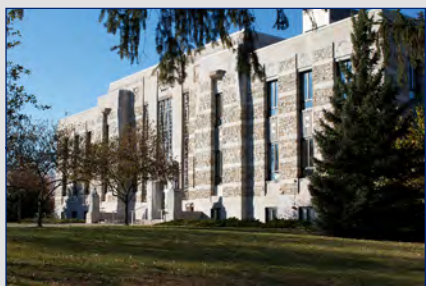
(4) Union Block
208-212 Central Avenue N

In 1894, Frank Little, an insurance salesman, approached City fathers with a proposition: if he could sell \$700,000 of insurance in town, he would donate \$30,000 toward construction of a new city hall and library. The building's design was influenced by Romanesque castles and manor houses in southern France, as can be seen in the red pressed bricks, its many rounded arches and the belt course separating the lower and upper stories. As Frank Little's insurance sales slumped, work halted on the unfinished building. While Little pressed forward, eventually mortgaging his house, he could never come up with the final donation of \$10,000. The City Council debated its next step, but finally authorized construction to proceed. It was a controversial decision, especially as the expense of the beautiful interior woodwork ran up. The new city hall and library finally opened its doors on January 1, 1898, nearly three years after its exterior was completed. At the building's dedication, city leadership praised the beautiful new city hall as clear evidence that Faribault was, indeed, the Athens of the West. This appreciation carried over to later generations, and in 1980, the building was restored retaining many details from the original interior.



(5) Faribault City Hall
208 1st Avenue NW

In 1856 Faribault was established as the county seat for the newly organized Rice County. The courthouse helped to create a stable local economy, centered on the regular stream of court cases and legal filings that encouraged lawyers, surveyors and real estate agents to establish offices nearby. In addition, it provided employment for local citizens who processed county records and managed the jail. Hotels and livery stables profited when county residents came to town to transact business. The first official courthouse was built in 1874 and was a magnificent Italianate structure that stood until a fire swept through it in February 1931. The new courthouse is a striking contrast from the elaborate style of the first courthouse. Constructed of Faribault stone, it employs strong horizontal bands of finished stone terminating in a flat roof, capped with relief sculpture extolling civic virtues, agriculture and commerce. Step inside to see the rich interior details in the main rotunda, a masterpiece of Art Moderne interior design. It features polished black and gray Tennessee marble on the walls, floors and stairs, with a sweeping staircase set off by metal fixtures and glass. The new courthouse was a success and has been used constantly since opening in 1934.



(6) Rice County Courthouse
218 3rd Street NW

Justice tended to be routine in Rice County. Sometimes the work included criminal cases – theft, disorderly conduct, assault – but just as often the sheriff helped the courts of carrying out its work settling property disputes and personal injury suits. But some cases were not routine. In September 1876, the Younger brothers, Cole, James and Bob, became the jail's most famous inmates. Captured following their bold Northfield bank robbery attempt with Jesse and Frank James, the brothers were brought to Faribault for trial and locked up in the county jail. During the ensuing two months, the sheriff confronted a circus-like atmosphere as family members, reporters and gawkers descended on Faribault. One report said that the Youngers were host to more than 5,000 visitors during those two months. Years later, the county had outgrown the old jail and it was demolished in 1910. The new jail uses the Richardsonian Romanesque style, with its impressive rounded tower accenting the entrance, the red tile roof, and the rusticated Kettle River stone foundation and trim. This building remained in use as the Rice County Jail until 1975.

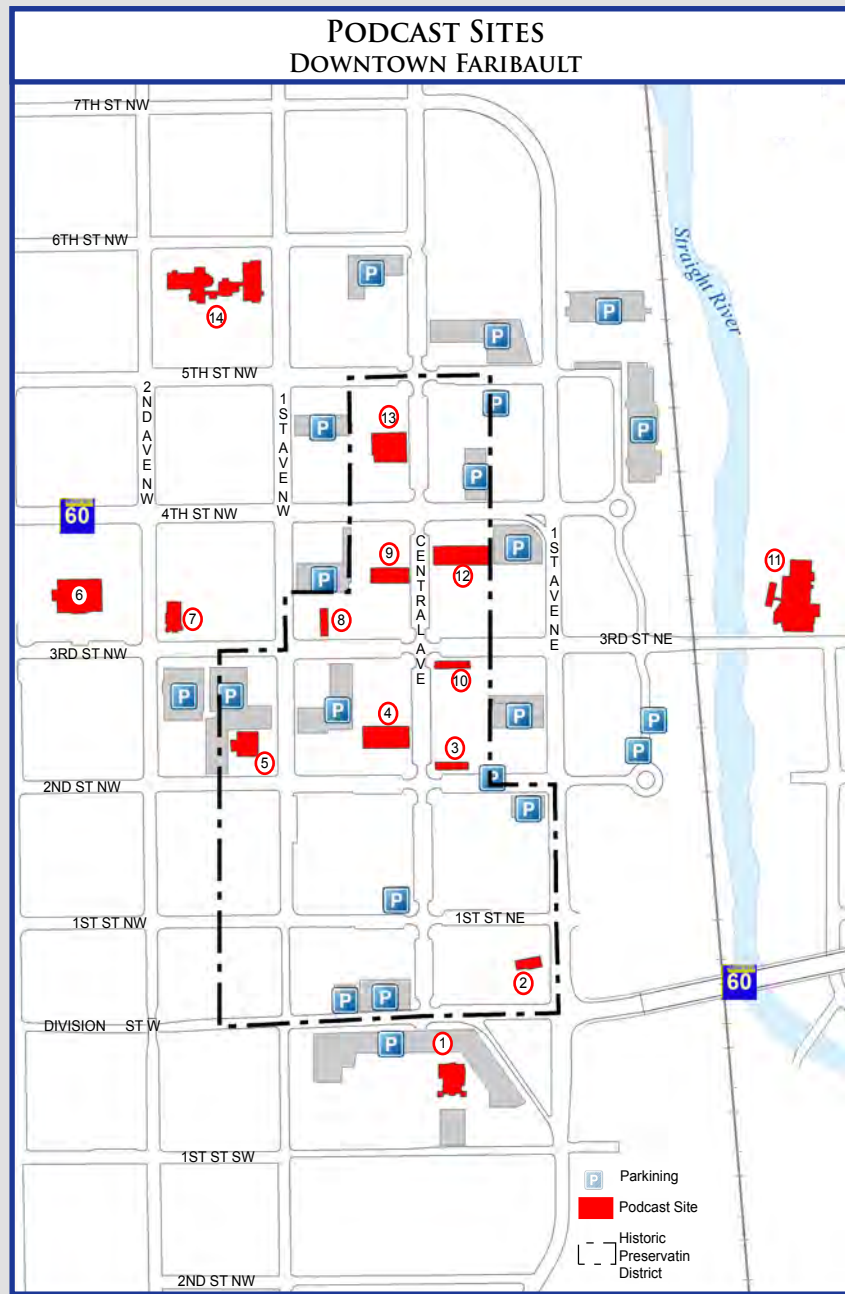


(7) Rice County Jail
128 3rd Street NW



(8) Timothy J. McCarthy Building
24 3rd Street NW

Built by Timothy J. McCarthy, this is Faribault's only polished marble façade, constructed with stone from Vermont, and rendered in the Italianate style. It features a highly ornate bracketed cornice and flattened arch windows. Originally born in Ireland, McCarthy came to the United States with his family when he was four years old. He eventually relocated to the Faribault area to help his widowed mother, who had moved to the growing Irish community of Shieldsville, located just west of Faribault. McCarthy had a successful business career, first as a teamster and then as a grocer. In 1875 he changed careers, purchasing a granite and marble company, opening a small brickyard on the outskirts of town, and working as an undertaker. After a fire destroyed his business in 1883, McCarthy acquired this lot and proceeded to turn his storefront into an advertisement for his skills.



(9) Bachrach Clothing Company

316-318 Central Avenue N

The Jim and Joe (Bachrach) Clothing Company was established in 1877. Its original location was at 203 Central Avenue until a fire in that building forced it to move to this location. This impressive Italianate structure has a heavy metal cornice and ornate window hoods. Jim and Joe's was known for their extensive advertising and called themselves the "Poor Man's Friend." Their advertising worked and soon they opened additional stores in Owatonna, Kenyon and Claremont. The business was one of Faribault's oldest family-owned stores until it closed its doors in 2006.

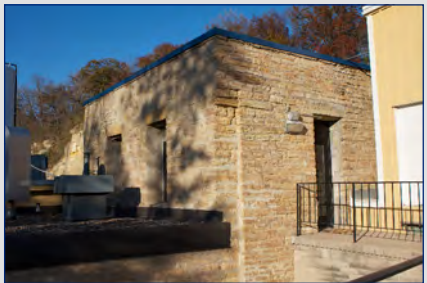


(10) Citizen's National Bank Building

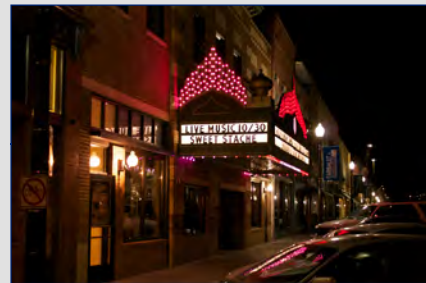
229 Central Avenue N

In 1857, brothers Hudson and Hiram Wilson moved to Faribault and opened a private bank. Fourteen years later, the Citizen's Bank was incorporated and organized as a national bank in 1871. As the bank president, Hudson Wilson played an important role in community life, serving for 33 years as treasurer of the State School and holding the office of chairman of the Rice County Commissioners for nine years. The beautiful Romanesque Revival building, including first floor windows set in wide arches with keystones, commanded an excellent view of Faribault's business center. In the last good year before the stock market crash, 1929, the bank decided to move to newer, more spacious headquarters at the corner of 4th Street and Central Avenue. Unfortunately, as the nation sank into the Great Depression, Citizens Bank made some risky investments, which led to its closing in 1933.

This stone building is one of the few remaining landmarks associated with the brewing industry in Faribault. In 1857, two brothers from Germany, Ernst and Godfrey Fleckenstein moved to Faribault and constructed a brewery along the bluffs at Oak and 3rd Streets. There, they could take advantage of the natural and manmade caverns in the limestone and sandstone bluffs along the Straight River that provided an ideal climate to store and age their beer. After several years in partnership, however, the two brothers parted ways and became competitors. When Godfrey's brewery closed in this location in 1907, it became the site of various other enterprises until purchased by Felix Frederiksen in 1936 – and this is what remains from Faribault's great age of brewing. Frederiksen founded the Treasure Cave Cheese Company, the first commercial producer of blue cheese in the United States, and that cheese-making tradition continues today in the caves of Faribault.



(11) Godfrey Fleckenstein Brewery
222 3rd Street NE



(12) Paradise Center for the Arts
219-323 Central Avenue N

From its founding, Faribault had its share of theaters and halls. In 1894 on this site, the magnificent Opera House opened its doors for the first time. Over the years, the Opera House presented Shakespearean plays, lectures and even Minneapolis Symphony concerts. Like many other Midwestern opera houses, it was converted to a moving picture venue in 1908 and renamed the Grand Theater. On a bitterly cold night in January 1929, fire swept through the old opera house and left it in ruins. The structure was rebuilt as the Paramount Theater. For the new theater, they chose the motif of a Moorish courtyard with Turkish caps over the doors, turrets and "stonework" on the walls. Above the seats, a special projector illuminated the ceiling with images of stars and moving clouds. Unfortunately, as new multiplex theaters opened in the 1990s, attendance diminished and the Paramount closed its doors. However, in recent years, through extensive fundraising efforts and community sweat equity, the theater has been restored to its former glory, and now the Paradise Center for the Arts serves as a cultural center for the community.

The Ochs Brothers were the sons of German immigrants and members of a tightly knit family that grew up in New Ulm, Minnesota. One of the brothers, William, was deaf, and attended the Minnesota School for the Deaf in Faribault. After graduating, William Ochs decided to remain in town and opened a small, one-room variety store. It did so well that he sent for his brothers to help. In 1888 they opened the Ochs Brothers store, selling dry goods and notions. It became one of the leading stores in Faribault, and other Ochs Brothers branches opened in Rochester, Owatonna, Waseca and Austin. After buying out a competitor, the Ochs Brothers moved to this location in 1911. Through the years, the store gained a reputation not only as a great place to shop, but also a good place to work – especially since they offered employment for women as retail salespeople. The Ochs Brothers Department Store remained in business here until closing its doors in the 1970s. The new owners of the building enclosed the façade with metal panels in an attempt to look "modern", but in recent years, the State Bank of Faribault has restored the building to reflect its original appearance.



(13) Ochs Department Store
414-420 Central Avenue N



(14) Cathedral of Our Merciful Saviour

101 6th Street NW

Some cathedrals in the American Episcopal Church began as places of worship for congregations and were later converted into cathedrals. This cathedral rendered in the English-influenced Gothic Revival style was the very first one to be built as a cathedral. Bishop Henry Whipple laid the cornerstone of his own cathedral on July 16, 1862. The cathedral was completed in 1869 and the carillon tower was constructed in 1902. The beautiful church with modified buttresses was built of Trenton blue limestone cut from quarries at Falls Creek, east of Faribault. One of the cathedral's beautiful stained glass windows, referred to as the "Lamb of God" window, was given by Native American children who raised funds by picking and selling berries.